

Getting Around Town



Above: A bus along Fredericksburg Road.

The fastest route from point A to point B may be a straight line, but it doesn't do much for the scenery.

– Jesús de la Torre, Jefferson Neighborhood

Introduction

The Near Northwest Community is well-served by public transit and has a street pattern that allows for good traffic flow due to multiple routes between destinations.

This chapter of the Near Northwest Community Plan focuses on the community's goals, objectives and actions steps for enhancing the pedestrian environment, ensuring high-quality mass transit and transit facilities, improving the bicycle network, and learning more about state highways. The chapter also calls for maintaining the area's drainage and sewer infrastructure, calming traffic, eliminating traffic congestion, improving street maintenance and lighting, utilizing alleys, and enhancing notification about project funding and design.

Near Northwest Community Plan



Views along community streets

Goal 4 - Multi-Modal Transportation System

Provide an interconnected, coordinated and efficient transportation system that is accessible to all throughout the community.

Objective 4.1: Pedestrian Environment

Enhance the pedestrian environment to encourage neighbors to walk to commercial centers, schools, parks and all parts of the community.

Action Steps:

4.1.1 Investigate areas in need of sidewalk/curb/crosswalk maintenance, construction or installation (see items 1 – 15 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of projects to investigate).

- *Gather and discuss sidewalk/curb/crosswalk concerns with area residents and business representatives.*
- *Develop a prioritized list of proposed enhancements for submission to the CoSA Public Works Department.*
- *Focus on major thoroughfares, routes to schools and paths to commercial centers.*
- *Pass petitions for high priority enhancements.*

4.1.2 Research sources and request funding for sidewalks, curbs and crosswalks prioritized in the above action step.

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition - Pedestrian Safety Committee

Partnerships: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, CoSA Public Works Dept., MPO's Pedestrian Mobility Task Force

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition - Pedestrian Safety Committee

Partnerships: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, CoSA Public Works Dept., MPO's Pedestrian Mobility Task Force

Funding Sources: CoSA Neighborhood Accessibility & Mobility Program (NAMP), TxDOT, Grants

4.1.3 Discourage residents from blocking sidewalks with their parked cars and recreational vehicles.

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition - Pedestrian Safety Committee

Partners: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, CoSA Code Compliance, Neighborhood Action (Target Sweeps) and Police Depts.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

4.1.4 Investigate ways to improve the ability of pedestrians to cross major streets. Possible alternatives could include caution signs at cross walks, mid-block crosswalks with signage and the addition of median islands.

- *A priority location to address for pedestrian safety enhancements is Fredericksburg Road between Vollum and Loop 410.*

Timeline: Long (6+ years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition - Pedestrian Safety Committee

Partners: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, CoSA Public Works Dept., Jefferson-Woodlawn Lake CDC

Funding Sources: TxDOT, CoSA, Grants

Objective 4.2: Mass Transit

Work in partnership with area transit agencies to provide the best mass transit system.



Community bus shelter

Action Steps:

4.2.1 Encourage the planting of trees in a safe manner at bus stops throughout the planning area and the installation of bus shelters at locations with higher ridership levels.

- *Ensure appropriate maintenance of the street furniture and plantings.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: VIA, MPO, CoSA Planning and Public Works Depts., City Arborist, Keep San Antonio Beautiful, Environmental organizations

Funding Sources: VIA, CoSA, NICP

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Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years) to Long (6+ years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: VIA, MPO, AACOG, Businesses, San Antonio area Chambers of Commerce, Environmental organizations

Funding Sources: MPO, FTA, City taxes

4.2.2 Educate community members about light rail and other rapid rail alternatives.

- *Review positives and negatives, the potential for lost federal funding, Clean Air Act implications and health consequences.*
- *Research opinions and study light rail successes.*
- *Establish relationships with VIA and the MPO.*
- *Look at possible light rail links such as from downtown UTSA to the Medical Center.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: VIA, NAs

Funding Sources: VIA

4.2.3 Investigate serving area bus routes with smaller buses to reduce the impact on neighborhood streets.

- *Participate in the comprehensive service planning process by VIA to review bus service.*
- *Investigate which routes already have the smaller 30-foot buses.*
- *Learn more about the criteria used to evaluate whether a smaller bus can be used.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: VIA, MPO, CoSA, NAs, Environmental organizations

Funding Sources: Grants

4.2.4 Promote bus ridership to improve air quality.

Helpful Hint: You can call 311 to report street signs blocked by foliage. Be sure to give detailed information on the sign's location. A CoSA Public Works Department crew generally will trim any obstructing greenery within 48 hours.

Objective 4.3: Bikeways

Increase the number of bike routes within the planning area, building on the strength of the connections established by existing bike routes.

Action Steps:

4.3.1 Form a committee to assess needs for bikeways within the Near NW Community.

- *Work closely with existing bicycling organizations.*
- *Gather feedback from property owners on affected streets.*
- *Present recommendations for an expanded, integrated system of bikeways to access community facilities to the CoSA Public Works Department, the MPO and other biking-related organizations.*
- *Consider paths to schools and parks when developing recommendations (see items 16 – 18 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of paths to consider).*

4.3.2 Improve maintenance of existing bike routes. Develop a regular bikeway maintenance schedule, with additional funding if necessary, to remove broken glass, etc. and check for low tree limbs (see item 19 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a path to be placed on the proposed maintenance schedule).

- *Citizens can report problems by calling 311.*

4.3.3 Discourage drivers from parking vehicles in bike lanes.

- *Work with the CoSA Police Department to clarify when tickets can be issued for parking in bike lanes. Lobby for legislation to make bikeway parking illegal.*
- *Where significant conflicts exist, work with CoSA Public Works Department to determine if “no parking signs” can be installed.*



Area bicyclist

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Concerned Citizens for Bike Riders

Partners: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, Bexar County Commissioners, MPO, CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: CoSA, Grants, MPO, Bexar County

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Concerned Citizens for Bike Riders

Partners: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: CoSA, Grants

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Concerned Citizens for Bike Riders

Partners: NAs, Homeowners, City Officials, CoSA Police and Public Works Depts., State representatives

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

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Road construction project

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partners: Neighborhood Association Traffic Committee Chairs

Partnerships: TxDOT, State representatives

Funding Sources: No cost

Objective 4.4: Highways

Learn more about the process for maintaining and improving state highways and interstates.

Action Steps:

4.4.1 Develop a working relationship with TxDOT.

- *Visit and use information from the TxDOT website (www.dot.state.tx.us/).*
- *Request updates on projects within the planning area.*
- *Print information in community newsletters.*

Goal 5 - Infrastructure Improvements

Maintain and invest in the area's street network and public infrastructure.



Area drainage channel

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Planning, Public Works and Neighborhood Action Depts., Area businesses, Judges, Parole officers, Environmental organizations, SAWS

Funding Sources: CoSA, NICP, Grants

Objective 5.1: Sewage/Drainage

Ensure area drainage and sewage infrastructure is well maintained and meets the community's needs in an environmentally friendly manner.

Action Steps:

5.1.1 Initiate drainage channel clean-up partnerships including graffiti abatement and brush removal between neighbors, the CoSA Public Works Department and area sponsors. Encourage the funding of drainage channel maintenance.

- *Encourage tree plantings efforts where feasible.*
- *Educate neighbors, as a part of clean up efforts, about the problems caused by people who illegally dump trash, brush or yard trimmings in drainage channels.*

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5.1.2 Identify locations with specific drainage problems where new infrastructure or drainage ditch repair is needed. Prioritize projects and locate funding sources (see items 20 – 36 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of projects to investigate).

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: CoSA

5.1.3 Design and implement an educational campaign to inform residents that the stormwater and runoff flowing through area drainage infrastructure flows into Woodlawn Lake or Martinez Creek.

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: Colleges, High schools, Middle schools, Businesses, Environmental organizations, SARA, CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: EPA, Grants, Fund-raisers

5.1.4 Initiate a study to determine whether the sewer system has adequate capacity to handle current and future growth. Take necessary actions called for in the study.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years))

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: SAWS, CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: Grants, SAWS

Objective 5.2: Traffic Calming

Enhance the street network to make it safe for all roadway users.

Action Steps:

5.2.1 Identify areas that are experiencing frequent speeding and request CoSA Police Department enforcement as a short-term remedy (see items 37 – 53 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of areas experiencing frequent speeding).



Diagram of a traffic circle

Timeline: Short (1- 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Police Dept., Cellular on Patrol, School officials, NAs

Funding Sources: CoSA

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Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept., MPO, NAs, Bicycling groups, Environmental organizations

Funding Sources: CoSA, MPO, Businesses

5.2.2 Propose longer-term strategies to address areas with frequent speeding.

- *Consider narrowing streets by adding bike lanes, medians or sidewalks, allowing on-street parking and protecting/planting large canopy trees.*
- *Evaluate the traffic impacts of re-striping four lane streets in residential areas for two lanes with the remaining pavement used for bike lanes and/or a center turn lane.*

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CPS, Banks, Corporations, SA Trees, City Year, CoSA Planning and Public Works Depts., Environmental organizations

Funding Sources: NICP, Grants

5.2.3 Maintain existing large street trees, enhance the available green space with greenery and design for planting strips large enough for street trees whenever possible in street construction projects to enhance the community's quality of life as well as calm traffic.

- *Consider participating in the adopt a street tree or median effort.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works and Police Depts., NAs

Funding Sources: CoSA, MPO

5.2.4 Research city street sign standards as they relate to night driving. Investigate providing larger, more reflective, easier to read street signage.

- *Develop a maintenance schedule that reflects the luminosity life span of street signage.*
- *Encourage the addition of block numbers to street signs.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Residents, NAs, Schools, Businesses

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works, Fire and Police Depts.

Funding Sources: CoSA

5.2.5 Explore traffic calming features to address residential speeding (see items 37 - 53 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of potential project areas). Consider the impact of traffic calming features on emergency vehicles.

5.2.6 Work with SAC-RTF (Radio, TV, Film) Program to

develop positive ad campaign to promote safe driving and make driving the speed limit “cool”.

Timeline: Mid (3- 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: SAC, Banks, Corporations

Funding Sources: Grants, Fundraisers

Objective 5.3: Traffic Control

Address traffic congestion by initiating traffic improvement measures.

Action Steps:

5.3.1 Address traffic congestion and other circulation issues by establishing specific priority projects and identifying funding sources (see items 54 – 77 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of areas to investigate).



Traffic on a commercial street

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Police and Public Works Depts., MPO, TxDOT

Funding Sources: CoSA, MPO, TxDOT, Grants

5.3.2 Consider temporarily changing neighborhood streets to one-way traffic during special events at Woodlawn Lake Park to address traffic flow.

- *Investigate other means to ease congestion issues.*
- *Potentially conduct a traffic study to determine effective traffic control measures during special events.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Parks & Recreation, Police and Public Works Depts., Festival sponsors, NAs, Religious institutions

Funding Sources: CoSA

5.3.3 Improve the coordination of area traffic signals to improve traffic flow (see item 78 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for an area in need of investigation for traffic signal coordination).

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Public Works Dept., TxDOT

Funding Sources: CoSA

5.3.4 Review major roads to identify areas in need of left

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Timeline: Long (6+ years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept., TxDOT

Funding Sources: CoSA, TxDOT



Construction crews at work in the planning area

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept., TxDOT

Funding Sources: CoSA, TxDOT

turn lanes and/or left turn lights. The addition of left turn lanes and/or signals should occur without widening streets or creating pedestrian unfriendly environments.

Objective 5.4: Street Maintenance & Lighting

Provide regularly scheduled maintenance and upgrades to roadways to ensure well-lit, smooth riding surfaces on all local streets.

Action Steps:

5.4.1 Partner with the CoSA Public Works Department and TxDOT to develop a maintenance schedule of the streets within the area.

- *Prioritize streets in need of improvement (see items 79 – 86 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of potential projects).*
- *Coordinate the proposed maintenance schedule with the life-expectancy of area streets.*
- *Encourage utility and communication companies to coordinate with the CoSA Public Works Department to avoid street cuts after recent street repairs and ensure high-quality replacement if street cuts are necessary.*

5.4.2 Research maintenance of stripes on all streets in San Antonio. Set a goal for re-striping more frequently, preferably with thermoluminescent paint.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept. – Street Maintenance

Funding Sources: CoSA Street Maintenance

5.4.3 Coordinate with area businesses to push for im-

provements to particular streets.

5.4.4 Identify priority areas in need of additional street lighting and pursue funding (see items 87 – 89 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of potential projects).

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept., Businesses

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

5.4.5 Encourage the CoSA Public Works Department and City of Balcones Heights to work together on planning for street/sidewalk maintenance.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CPS, CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: CPS, Grants

Objective 5.5: Alleys and Utilities

Continue to utilize area alleys and encourage the burying of overhead utilities.

Action Steps:

5.5.1 Utilize alleys as appropriate locations for underground utilities including electric, telephone, cable, gas, water, trash pickup and emergency service access. Reinstate alley trash pickup (see items 90 – 93 on the Getting Around Town Map and Attachment for a preliminary list of potential areas for alley trash pickup reinstatement).

Timeline: Long (6+ years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Public Works Dept., Balcones Heights

Funding Sources: Minimal cost



A well maintained alley

5.5.2 Encourage each neighborhood to offer a “best al-

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CPS, SAWS, CoSA Fire, Police and Public Works Depts., Cable, Telephone, Cellular on Patrol

Funding Sources: Underground utility conversion process, State and federal grants, SAWS, CPS, SW Bell, Cable Companies

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Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: NAs, Residents, Cellular on Patrol

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

ley” award each quarter to the group of residents who provide the best alley maintenance.

Timeline: Mid to Long (3 + years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CPS, CoSA Public Works, Time Warner Cable, SW Bell

Funding Sources: Underground utility conversion process, State and fed-

5.5.3 Actively pursue the burying of utilities throughout the planning area with a priority placed on the major commercial corridors. Encourage, wherever feasible, that the utilities be buried in alleys. (also see Action Step 2.3.4)

5.5.4 Work with City Departments to develop a publicity program including reminder posters, radio/TV spots and postcards to improve awareness of the property owner’s responsibility for alley maintenance.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Code Compliance, External Relations, Neighborhood Action, Police, and Public Works Depts., Radio & TV stations

Funding Sources: CoSA, Grants

5.5.5 Investigate programs and policies to discourage illegal dumping in alleys.

- *Potentially pursue non-City funding for increased alley lighting through the planning area and/or review City street and alley lighting policies.*

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CPS, CoSA Code Compliance, Police and Public Works Depts., Cellular on Patrol

Funding Sources: Grants

5.5.6 Periodically resurface or regrade alleys where needed.

Timeline: Mid (3 – 5 years)

Lead Partners: Near NW Coalition

Partnerships: CoSA Public Works Dept.

Funding Sources: Grants

Objective 5.6: Involvement/Notice

Improve coordination and involvement in area infrastructure projects.

Action Steps:

5.6.1 Encourage the CoSA Public Works Department, the MPO and TxDOT to mail notices or send emails informing area neighborhood associations of 1) when funds are available for infrastructure enhancements, 2) opportunities to be involved in the project design process, 3) status reports on current projects and 4) the timing of regular maintenance efforts such as street sweeping. Coordinate with Objective 4.4 Highways and Objective 10.2 Near NW Newsletter.



Community members gather at a meeting

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Public Works Dept., MPO, TxDOT, NAs

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

5.6.2 Encourage the CoSA Development Services Department to organize forums for neighbors to discuss the traffic impact of proposed, significant infill housing and/or commercial development projects.

Timeline: Short (1 – 2 years)

Lead Partner: Near NW Coalition

Partners: CoSA Development Services Dept.

Funding Sources: Minimal cost

Helpful Hint: You can call 311 to report potholes. Be sure to give detailed information on the pothole's location. A Public Works Department crew generally will repair any potholes within 48 hours.

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